

Kiteboarding and Windsurfing Information and Safety Awareness

Kiteboarding and Windsurfing is allowed year-round within Chicago Park District swim areas *only* at Montrose Beach and *only* as designated by the on-duty Lifeguards or other Chicago Park District designees. ***While Lifeguards may be on-duty during the Memorial Day to Labor Day swim season, participating is at your own risk.*** Kiteboarding and Windsurfing will be allowed out-of season (from Labor Day until Memorial Day), but again, ***no Lifeguards are on-duty during the off-season and participating is at your own risk.***

Kiteboarding/Windsurfing Rules and Protocol

1. Only PASA Level II (Intermediate) or IKO Level 3-L Certified Kiteboarders will be allowed to kite at Montrose Beach. This prohibits teaching kiteboarding or flying “traction” kites with students on Montrose Beach. All local Kiteboarders must obtain a Kite Streamer which identifies them as certified. Visitors will be able to exchange their certification cards for a day use streamer (subject to CPD approval).
2. All Kiteboarders will follow generally accepted Kiteboarding Safety Practices and use attached Kite Safety Leashes. (No grab handles) 100 Foot Safety Zone from Occupied Beaches, Piers, and other Facilities while riding.
3. Kiteboarding allowed when bathing/swimming areas are closed due to high wind and wave conditions.
4. Kiteboarding may be allowed by the Captain of the Guards at other times. (Cool Weather, low beach attendance, etc)

STREAMER SYSTEM

Kiteboarders wishing to use Montrose Beach will obtain a kite streamer from www.chicagokitesurfing.com or, if available, at the lifeguard house at Montrose. The streamer will be flown from the kite or pigtail. The Streamer will identify the Kiteboarder as a Certified Rider who meets the minimum certification standard for Montrose Beach.

GOLD- Friends of the Beach. 5 Gold streamers were issued to Kiteboarders willing to assist others in the use of Montrose Beach. They will also be available to assist the Guards and answer their questions or concerns about Kiteboarding.

RED- IKO Certified and Insured Kiteboarder. Certified to IKO Level 3-L or better.

BLUE- PASA or IKO Certified as has always been required. PASA Level II or IKO Level 3-L.

IMPORTANT NOTE: WINDSURFERS WISHING TO ACCESS THE LAKE MICHIGAN WATER TRAIL MAY DO SO AT ANY TIME. PLEASE SEE “LAKE MICHIGAN WATER TRAIL (PADDLE SPORTS)” ON THIS WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING INFORMATION AND SAFETY FOR THE LAKE MICHIGAN WATER TRAIL.

It is important that you follow these general guidelines while kiteboarding/windsurfing:

Kiteboarding and windsurfing require strong swimming abilities, training, and common sense. Don't forget that you could be seriously injured or killed after hitting any surface (including water and sand) while participating on this sport. So before you launch, look into the distance for potential problems before it's too late. Never go airborne near shallow water or near fixed or floating objects because it is dangerous. Once you get into the air it will be difficult to control exactly where you go, and strong winds can always force you into a direction that you did not anticipate.

First, to help maximize safety you should always check the weather forecast, color radar, real-time wind reports on-line for storms and excessively gusty winds, wind direction changes and lightning hazards because all of these can mean big trouble if they happen while you're airborne. Do not kiteboard or windsurf when storms are approaching. Remember that storm fronts are very dangerous because they are often preceded by strong, variable wind gusts and lightening. If you feel a static shock from the kite bar, you must land the kite immediately and seek shelter (don't forget that you can get electrocuted).

Second, kite surfing must be done in wide-open areas. Never kite surf in crowded areas, near rocks, trees, or power lines. In general there should be a minimum of 100 yards of safe distance from all hazards.

Finally, using the right gear is essential for safe kite surfing. Helmets and impact vests save lives. You should also wear appropriate exposure clothing for conditions because you could become disabled and be stuck there for a while. Never remove or disable factory-installed safety equipment or releases – it's there for a reason. Read all instructions and warnings that accompanies your gear. Using too large a kite for the wind conditions or your experience level is extremely dangerous, so underpowered riding is preferable to overpowered riding. When in doubt, go to a smaller kite and see how it goes. Always stay within the wind range specified by the manufacturer for the kite. Carry a safety knife attached to the harness for cutting tangled lines. This could save your life if you become disabled in Lake Michigan.

And remember that most accidents happen when landing or launching, so keep your eyes open and stay alert!

SEE MORE INFORMATION AT

<http://www.chicagokitesurfing.com>